

# Memphis - Shelby County Offender Re-entry Initiative

## RFP Purpose

The City of Memphis as administrative entity for the Consortium of Local Governments and Workforce Investment Network (WIN), LWDA 13, is pleased to issue this Request for Proposals (RFP) for Transition to Work for Adult Offenders at Risk of Reoffending in PY17-PY19.

Proposals are being solicited for a suite of services to be provided to people with felony convictions at high risk of re-offending. The suite of services will include but not be limited to work readiness and life skills education, mental health counseling, short-term paid transitional employment, full-time job placement and post-placement services. WIN is seeking evidence-based programs that reduce the likelihood of re-incarceration and help participants achieve stable employment and build a foundation for a productive life.

## Definitions of Required Services

- **Work Readiness and Life Skills Education:** Includes but is not limited to the following topics: appropriate workplace behavior, problem solving skills, resume writing, job-searching, personal presentation, basics of communication, how to discuss conviction and criminal history on an interview, finding stable housing, nutrition and exercise, personal finances and securing transportation.
- **Mental Health Treatment:** The provision of an array of evidence-based interventions as needed, including a range of cognitive and other therapies, family therapy, and medication assisted treatment, prioritizing individuals with serious mental illness (defined as a major thought or mood disorder that produces substantial distress, impairs normal functioning, and requires continuing treatment) and / or co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders. The program should be multidisciplinary in approach and agrees to work collaboratively with all other providers and community supervisors involved in the client's reentry into the community.
- **Short Term Paid Transitional, Subsidized Jobs:** Transitional Jobs (TJ) programs can come in a variety of forms, including programs focused on a single occupation or sector, cohort-based programs that place teams of individuals in project-based environments, programs that develop transitional jobs for each participant in an ad-hoc manner, and in-house placement programs. Transitional jobs must be limited to no more than 75 days, and require at least fifteen (15) but not more than forty (40) hours of work per week. WIN will subsidize transitional jobs at minimum wage (\$7.25/hour as of release of this RFP) but encourages respondents to develop TJ placements that pay self-sustaining wages. The ability of the respondents to leverage external funding to offset the wages of participants will be included in the proposal's evaluation, as will the demonstrated commitment of respondents to make every effort to limit the use of transitional, subsidized jobs only as necessary to facilitate transition to unsubsidized full-time job placement.

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- **Full-Time Job Placement:** Link people to traditional unsubsidized employment of 35 to 40+ hours a week. Offering assistance with making the necessary contacts and completing the required documentation of application for employment. Provide job development services to include developing and maintaining a listing of employment opportunities within the region as well as organizations that have experience with hiring people with criminal histories. Conduct regular meetings with potential employers to inform of available resources, funding, and training, etc. available to employers of people with criminal histories.
- **Post-Placement Services:** Provide job coaching services in a variety of forms, including acting as an intermediary for the employers to discuss any concerns about employees, making every attempt to address the employers' concerns and engaging the employee to encourage job retention (i.e. case management, support services, and incentives, etc.). Assist with reemployment in the event of job loss and with advancement opportunities.

## Target Population

Services will be provided to high-risk offenders incarcerated with and released by Shelby County Department of Corrections **who are at a moderate to high risk to recidivate as determined by [place the risk tool being used to assess here].**

## Performance Outcomes

Projects will target and measure success against the following target outcomes:

- Reduced recidivism where recidivism is defined as: *Conviction of a new felony or misdemeanor committed within three years of release from custody or committed within three years of placement on supervision for a previous criminal conviction. ("Committed" refers to the date of offense, not the date of conviction.)*
- Number of days from incarceration release to full-time unsubsidized employment
- Retention in full-time unsubsidized employment for 1 year from start date with minimal employment gaps
- Retention in full-time unsubsidized employment retention for 2 years from employment start date with minimal employment gaps

## Other Key Performance Milestones TBD

## Evidence Based.

Evidence-based practices involve using research and scientific studies to identify interventions that reliably produce significant reductions in recidivism when

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correctly applied to offender populations through the use of the following four principles of effective intervention:

- Risk Principle – focuses attention on the crucial question of WHO is being served and calls for targeting higher risk offenders.
- Need Principle – requires that priority be given to addressing criminogenic risk/need factors with a clear focus on WHAT programs are delivered.
- Treatment Principle – conveys the importance of using behavioral treatment approaches to achieve the best possible outcomes and requires attention to the question of HOW programs are delivered.
- Fidelity Principle – draws attention to HOW WELL programs are delivered and reiterates the necessity that programs be implemented as designed.

## **Funding Amount**

The Grant Award will be \$1.5 million for a single contract. Funding must be used to supplement, rather than supplant, funding for existing programs/projects. Supplanting is defined as replacing those funds identified and appropriated for the same purpose prior to the grant award. Grant funds may be used to expand an existing effort or to create a new project. Project expansion includes, but is not limited to, adding services to a program that is currently offered to offenders and extending existing services for offenders to a larger target population or new geographic area.

## **Grant Period**

Successful proposals will be funded for a project period that will commence ....2 year performance period?

## **Independent Evaluator and Program Evaluation**

Grantees are required to contract with an independent evaluator for the purpose of identifying performance objectives that demonstrate whether a reduction in recidivism occurred due to the project's methodologies/strategies. Performance improvements related to recidivism reduction might include, but are not limited to: reduction in rearrests, an increase in the number of jail days avoided, and budgetary savings if the performance targets are achieved. The independent evaluator is also to develop an objective process to determine whether the performance targets have been achieved. This process shall include defined performance metrics, a monitoring plan, and a calculation of the amount and timing of payments that would be earned during each year of the agreement if performance targets are achieved as determined by the independent evaluator.

Applicants will be required to identify the research design that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the project with the project goals (i.e., the expected benefits to participants) and the project objectives (i.e., specific measurable accomplishments intended to advance project goals) clearly stated. Applicants are encouraged to utilize a rigorous evaluation design, which includes outcome measures that are credible and easily tracked by a cost-effective means, and the

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method by which the impact of the program on the outcome measures will be determined.